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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: World No Tobacco Day 2020

World No Tobacco Day is a national event that informs the public about the dangers of tobacco use. This year, due to COVID-19 school closings, World No Tobacco Day was celebrated by Glen Cove Elementary and Middle School students enrolled in SAFE's Life Skills Training (LST) virtual workshops offered through the Glen Cove Youth Bureau's After 3 program.

This year's theme was to make youth aware of the Tobacco Industry's efforts to market their deadly product to youth, and for youth to speak out against the deceptive messages and make their voices heard. For the past decade SAFE and their partner, Tobacco Action Coalition of LI, Community Engagement Specialist Carol Meschkow have been collaborating with the Schools and the Glen Cove Youth Bureau to educate the local teens to be weary of the lure of Point of Sale marketing, and the dangers of all flavored tobacco products. Annually for World No Tobacco Day the partners have been bringing youth centered interactive programs to the community to afford an opportunity for youth to make their collective voices heard against the marketing tactics they have been exposed to in their neighborhoods retail establishments.

SAFE, Social Worker/Life Skills Trainer, Francesca Carbone and her students celebrated the day through a program to dispelling the myths and exposing the manipulation tactics employed by the "Big Tobacco" in their marketing ploy to target youth, including through the introduction of new and novel products, flavors and other attractive features. In addition, the teens were given an activity to create pictures or flyers to convey the need to either "Stop Tobacco Myths", or "End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products" and submit with a Selfie or take the Challenge, to create a 20-30 second announcement video using the above messages, and submit either a video, or written copy with a Selfie holding it up.

"I was very pleased and impressed with the students' knowledge, understanding, and lively participation. Despite zoom instruction their interaction was tremendous. The Activity and Challenge added another dimension and opportunity to reinforce the lesson while offering the youth an opportunity to express themselves in fun way" commented Ms. Carbone.

"Our teens have shown great commitment to the LST program. The addition of LST has really enriched our After 3 programming as well; and we are most fortunate to have Francesca spearheading Life Skills alongside After-3 Coordinator-Carolina Guastella", said Youth Bureau, Executive Director Spiro Tsirkas. "The professionals really work together seamlessly as a solid team and relate to such a degree with the teens, that as a result they have been able to make a huge impact on the youth's awareness of the issue and desire to make a change."

"I highly commend SAFE and the Youth Bureau for keeping connected and continuing to share the messaging with local youth despite the restrictions of the Pandemic. Successfully including elementary school students prior to reaching thirteen years old, which is the average age of a new smoker, was most

gratifying as it been the collective goal of the partners to drive the messaging down regarding the strategies employed by the Tobacco Industry at the Point-of-Sale, including at their trusted pharmacies”, commented Ms. Meschkow. Further, “The World No Tobacco Day” Theme for 2020 was a real win-win as it coincided with the end of the sale of flavored e-cigarettes as well as the sale of all tobacco products in pharmacies. The partner’s on-going educational work with the youth profoundly demonstrated to the teens the fruits of the collaborative efforts of grassroots (including them), community leaders and elected representatives in seeing this come to fruition.

LST is proven to reduce alcohol, tobacco, drug abuse, and violence while supporting the social and emotional development of youth. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about 2 of every 100 middle school students (2.3%) reported in 2019 that they smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days—a decrease from 4.3% in 2011. Additionally, about 6 of every 100 high school students (5.8%) reported in 2019 that they smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days—another decrease from 15.8% in 2011. It is important to educate youth through prevention education programs to foster and develop healthy decision making.

In the last 50 years, an estimated 20 million Americans have died prematurely due to tobacco-caused illnesses. For Quit Help contact the NYS Quit Line at: 1-866-NYS-Quit.

To learn more about SAFE and the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE’s website at www.safeglencove.org.